



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: March 10, 2022

SUBJECT: Barton Springs Pool Schedule Modification

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update regarding the operating schedule and staffing associated with Barton Springs Pool

Barton Springs Pool Spring Operations

In response to COVID-19, the Department's Aquatic Division ceased training and onboarding lifeguards during spring break of 2020. Training resumed in the spring of 2021; however, the staffing deficit has been difficult to overcome. There are approximately 100 lifeguards on payroll that are trained with valid certifications and ready to work. Because of its unique features, Barton Springs Pool, requires an additional Open Water Guard certification and training. There are only 23 certified Open Water Guards available to guard Barton Springs Pool. The Barton Springs guards also assist with training throughout the season and therefore, the Aquatic Division will be forced to close Barton Springs Pool on Mondays and Wednesdays until the staffing levels improve. This schedule will go into effect beginning March 21, 2022 and will continue until a sufficient number of guards can be hired, trained, and certified. These closures will not affect the 5:00 AM – 8:00 AM swim times, which will remain "swim at your own risk".

The Aquatic Division has made and will continue to make every attempt to have a fully operational schedule for the week of Spring Break (March 12th – March 20th), but with staffing levels so low, modification to the pool schedule or temporary capacity limitations may need to be imposed if there are any fluctuations in staff availability.

Lifeguard Recruiting

The Aquatic Division is actively recruiting lifeguards through the following methods and hopes to see an increase in applicants to be ready for the upcoming season:

- Job Fairs (virtual and in-person)
- Department Recruiting Events
- Social Media Campaigns
- Paid Advertising
- Direct Mailers
- Summer Completion Bonuses

In addition to a robust recruitment plan, the Parks and Recreation Department is exploring hiring incentives/hiring bonuses options to offer lifeguards (and other summer temporary staff) as motivation to work with the Department through the summer months. Because the Department has a higher than usual vacancy rate as it recovers from the full-time employee hiring freeze, sufficient budget is available for this one-time incentive this fiscal year.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager

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